

# GAZETTE

## Expert says reported military cuts may not be too bad at Fort Carson

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Some big changes could be on the horizon for Fort Carson and Southern Colorado as a whole.

The Pentagon is cutting its budget around \$260,000,000,000 over the next five years. Military sources have leaked that as part of budget cuts, the Army plans to reduce the number of combat brigades from 45 to as low as 32. That could mean the loss of about 80,000 soldier jobs. If a chunk of those cuts were to come to the Mountain Post, the effects could be devastating according to UCCS Economic Professor Fred Crowley. "They're a major driver in our economy. We do have to worry about losing military positions in the community," he says.

The cuts would not only affect the soldiers themselves, but the surrounding community as well. "For every 100 military positions in the community, we find that another 80 retail or local resident service jobs are created for the civilian sector," explains Crowley.

The leak comes as Fort Carson has plans already underway to bring in an additional 2,700 troops in 2014 as part of a new combat aviation brigade. That plan also comes with a construction price tag of about \$238.6 million dollars.

Given the new plans at Fort Carson, Professor Crowley says it's not time to panic yet. With big projects like these in the works, large cuts for Fort Carson don't seem likely when it comes down to simple dollars and cents. "You have to worry that we will lose something. But at the same time there's such a hug buildup of new infrastructure at Fort Carson, I would tend to think this would be less likely to suffer large losses," he explains, "Other bases that haven't had the big buildups that we've had for equipment and infrastructure are more likely."

We called Rep. Doug Lamborn's office for a comment on the leak. He sent us the following statement.

"The Obama Administration's plan to dramatically reduce the size of our Army is deeply troubling. It would be unwise and premature to speculate at this point how Fort Carson may or may not be affected. Unfortunately, to date, the Administration has been tight lipped about any specific force restructuring decisions that are inevitable given the size of cuts the President has mandated."

"These cuts put our nation at greater risk. We owe it to the American people to place the defense of this nation first. I will continue to work with my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee to ensure that national security and not budgets drive our defense policies."

"According to the most recent briefings with senior Army leaders, plans to bring an additional 2,700 troops to Fort Carson in 2014 as part of a new combat aviation brigade are still on track. Fort Carson is still set to get \$238.6 million for the first phase of construction in support of the new 13th Combat Aviation Brigade." - Rep. Doug Lamborn